MARVEL COMICS

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DANNY KETCH
GHOST RIDER

MACKIE · PICCIOTTO · GURU-eFX

MARVEL

PARENTAL ADVISORY

YEARS AGO...

IF YOU TELL ANYONE WHO KNOWS BROOKLYN THAT YOU LIVE IN CYPRESS HILLS...

...THEIR RESPONSE IS GOING TO BE, "NEAR THE CEMETERY?"

THE THING IS, ALL OF CYPRESS HILLS IS "NEAR THE CEMETERY."

DURING MOST DAYS, CEMETERIES ARE QUIET AND PEACEFUL PLACES IN WHICH THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED BEYOND THE VEIL REST AND ARE REMEMBERED.

BUT IN THE OLDEST CEMETERIES, THINGS OFTEN CHANGE WHEN DARKNESS FALLS.

AT THESE TIMES, THINGS ARE RARELY PEACEFUL...

...AND OFTEN DANGEROUS.

FWAK

KRAK

BLOOD AND VENGEANCE

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...HOW MUCH *PAIN* IS COURSING THROUGH MY BODY!

THROUGH MY *BRAIN!*

ARRRRRGH! IT'S *NOT* WHAT I SIGNED UP FOR!

THUD

FWAMM

TCHK

ACK!

YOU MAY *THINK* YOU KNOW PAIN, BUT...

...NOW YOU WILL FEEL THE PAIN OF ALL THOSE YOU HAVE HARMED TONIGHT.

YOU WILL FEEL...

...THE *PENANCE STARE!*

NO... NO...NO... NO...

NOOOOOOO!

HE SAID THAT NO ONE COULD HURT ME... EVER AGAIN!

HE... P-P-PROMISED... I WOULD GET BIGGER...STRONGER. TH-TH-THAT NO ONE WOULD LAUGH AT ME AGAIN.

NOT MY FORMER TEACHERS... OR CLASSMATES...N-N-NO ONE WOULD LAUGH. BUT H-HE SAID--ARGGGH! NOOOO!

WHO DID THIS TO YOU?

I... D-D-DON'T... KNOW.

FREEZE!

HANDS WHERE WE CAN SEE THEM OR WE'LL SHOOT!

THAT VOICE. IT'S STACY DOLAN.

DANNY KETCH-- MY HOST-- LOVES HER.

SHE DOESN'T KNOW THAT HE AND I ARE ONE.

POLICE

POLICE

KRAK KRAK KRAK KRAK

YOU ALWAYS SHOOT.

I'M SORRY, MASTER, IF THAT WAS UNSATISFACTORY.

PERHAPS I CHOSE POORLY WHEN GIVING OUR YOUNG FRIEND YOUR GIFT.

DON'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF, MY ***BROKER.*** YOUR CATCH PROVIDED AN AMUSING TASTE FOR ME. SHORT THOUGH IT MAY HAVE BEEN.

BUT THIS FLAMING-SKULLED DEMON...

...I AM DRAWN TO SOMETHING ABOUT HIM.

I WANT HIM.

YES, MASTER, BUT FIRST...THE OTHERS?

OF COURSE.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CYPRESS HILLS CEMETERY...

I ALWAYS RETURN TO THIS PLACE.

THE PLACE OF MY REBIRTH.

THE PLACE OF MY GREATEST FAILURE.

NOW I MUST RETURN *INSIDE* AND RELEASE *DANNY KETCH.*

FWOOSH

THIS IS WHERE IT ALL STARTED. WHERE MY SISTER, BARB...

BARB WAS WOUNDED RIGHT HERE IN THE CROSS-FIRE BETWEEN THE KINGPIN'S MEN AND DEATHWATCH'S.* I DRAGGED HER INTO THAT PILE OF RUBBLE.

*SEE GHOST RIDER (1990) #1! --DS

THAT'S WHEN I SAW SOMETHING GLOWING IN THE DARK...

I THOUGHT I COULD HIDE US AMONG A PILE OF CARS.

THAT'S WHEN I SAW THE *BIKE* FOR THE FIRST TIME...

...AND THE *MEDALLION OF POWER.*

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS... DIDN'T KNOW HOW MUCH IT WOULD CHANGE MY LIFE...

...DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT *GHOST RIDER.*

BUT I WAS *DRAWN* TO IT.

WHAT IF I HADN'T TOUCHED THE MEDALLION AND NEVER BECAME GHOST RIDER?

WHAT IF I WASN'T BLINDLY SEEKING *VENGEANCE* FOR THE SPILLED BLOOD OF THE INNOCENT...

...SAVING NOBODY?

WHAT IF--?

THAT *SCRATCH*... IS THAT NEW?

I'VE NEVER REALLY LOOKED AT THE MEDALLION SO CLOSELY BEFORE.

HAVEN'T HAD MUCH TIME TO THINK ABOUT IT AT ALL.

TIME TO RETHINK EVERYTHING.

IN ANOTHER PART OF BROOKLYN...

UGH!

FWACK

I DON'T CARE WHO YOU WORK FOR...FROM NOW ON, YOU SKIM A PIECE OFF FOR THE BAGMAN BROTHERS.

I...I...CAN'T. DO YOU KNOW WHO I ANSWER TO? JIMMY-6! HE'S--

WE DON'T CARE!

THUD THUD

THUD

YOU--AND EVERYONE ELSE-- ANSWER TO US NOW!

WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY? I WORK FOR YOU?

THE TWO OF YUZ ARE GONNA LET MY MAN GO.

AND THE THREE OF US ARE GOING TO HAVE A LITTLE TALK ABOUT HOW THINGS OPERATE AROUND HERE.

THOUGH IT'S REALLY GOIN' TO BE ME DOIN' THE TALKIN'. YOU GUYS ARE PROBABLY JUST GOING TO CRY.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

YER NEW AROUND HERE, SO I TOOK IT EASY ON YOU. THIS WAS LESSON *ONE*, BOYS... YOU DON'T SNIFF AROUND THE TERRITORIES OPERATED BY *JIMMY-6* OR *DON FORTUNATO.*

LESSON *TWO* IS...THERE *IS* NO LESSON TWO.

YOU APPEAR TO NEED SOME ASSISTANCE, GENTLEMEN. RAYMOND AND DONALD... IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN.

ERRRR...

ARRRR...

I AM THE *BROKER* OF A VERY GENEROUS MAN WHO SEEKS TO OFFER GIFTS TO ONES SUCH AS THE TWO OF YOU.

IF HIS TERMS ARE ACCEPTED...I WILL BESTOW UPON YOU *GREAT POWER.*

POWER THAT WILL ALLOW YOU TO GET RETRIBUTION ON THOSE WHO HAVE INFLICTED PAIN UPON YOU.

WHAA--?

THE "CATCH," AS YOU SAY, IS THAT HE REQUIRES A SMALL *TASTE.* I BELIEVE THAT IS YOUR VERNACULAR.

DO YOU AGREE TO THE TERMS?

ARRR... ERRR...

I'LL TAKE THAT AS A *YES.* IT *IS* A *DEAL.*

NOOOOOO!

ARRRRRGH!

A SHORT TIME LATER...

MOM! I-- BLAZE?!

ISN'T IT A WONDERFUL SURPRISE THAT *JOHNNY* STOPPED BY FOR A VISIT, DANIEL?

THE QUENTIN CARNIVAL IS PERFORMING UPSTATE, SO I THOUGHT I'D STOP BY AND SEE MY TWO FAVORITE CITY FOLKS.

I'LL LEAVE YOU TWO YOUNG MEN TO IT. I'VE GOT A GOOD BOOK WAITING FOR ME UPSTAIRS.

THANKS FOR THE COFFEE, MRS. K!

C'MON, KID...LET'S GO FOR A RIDE.

I JUST GOT BACK FROM--

I KNOW WHAT YOU GOT BACK FROM. I CAN STILL SMELL THE *HELLFIRE* ON YOU. LET'S GO.

THE OTHER SIDE OF BROOKLYN...

MY MOM PUT YOU UP TO THIS, RIGHT?

SHE'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU, DAN.

HELL... I'M WORRIED ABOUT ME AND EVERYONE ELSE... ALWAYS.

I'VE GOT THIS DEMON LIVING INSIDE OF ME...WITH ALL THIS POWER...AND FOR WHAT?

I STILL CAN'T KEEP EVERYONE SAFE.

YOU'RE PREACHING TO THE CHOIR, DAN.

I'VE TOLD YOU HOW LONG I TRIED TO PURGE ZARATHOS AND STOP BEING A RIDER, RIGHT?

HALF THE TIME, IT SEEMS LIKE WE CREATE OUR OWN BAD GUYS TO BRING DOWN.

MAYBE IT'S SOME SORT OF KARMA.

YEAH... I'VE ENOUGH TROUBLE WITH THIS LIFE.

ANYWAY, HOW ARE THINGS BETWEEN YOU AND STACY?

WOULD YOU BELIEVE ME IF I SAID FANTASTIC?

NOPE.

SHE'S A ROOKIE COP, HALF HER DEPARTMENT IS TRYING TO BRING GHOST RIDER DOWN...

...AND THE OTHER HALF IS TRYING TO DEAL WITH THE GANG WAR HEATING UP IN THE FIVE BOROUGHS.

THEY SHOULD JUST LET THE TRASH TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.

YOU STILL NOT DOING THE HELMET THING?

NAH! TOO CONSTRICTING. NOT GOING TO CHANGE UNTIL I'M CAUGHT.

AND I WON'T BE CAUGHT.

NYPD

NYPD

WEEWOOWEEWOOWEEWOOWEEWOOWEEWOOWEEWOO

AT THAT MOMENT...

C'MON OUT, JIMMY-6!!!

WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT *RULE NUMBER TWO!*

PTOOM PTOOM PTOOM PTOOM

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL THAT THING IS, BUT...

...I'M GOING TO PUT AN END TO IT.

NO.

EXCUSE ME?

YOU CAN *NOT* GO DOWN THERE, JIMMY.

THIS KINDA SUPER-CRAP IS OUT OF EVEN *YOUR* LEAGUE.

THROW ME A BEATING IF YOU WANT TO, BUT YOUR FATHER--THE DON--WILL DO WORSE TO US IF WE LET YOU GO DOWN THERE.

GRRRRRR!

SEE WHAT I MEAN? THAT THING IS TEARING THROUGH MORE THAN A DOZEN PEOPLE AND *NOTHING* FROM THE MEDALLION...NO GLOW...NO TRANSFORMATION.

WHAT'S THE POINT?

I'M GUESSING THERE'S NOT A LOT OF *INNOCENT* BLOOD BEING SPILLED DOWN THERE.

LIKE I SAID... LET THE TRASH TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.

STACY!

I'VE GOT TO--

DON'T BE A MORON, DAN.

YOU GO IN LIKE THIS...AGAINST THAT THING... AND YOU'RE *DEAD.*

STACY IS TRAINED AND HAS A GUN.

JIMMY-6!!!

YOU'RE ALL TALK AND NO ACTION, FAT MAN!

COME OUT AND SHOW US WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF!

BECAUSE THIS TERRITORY BELONGS TO THE *BAGMAN BROTHERS* FROM NOW ON.

MOMMY?

NO!

KTASH

KRAK

JUST STAY BEHIND ME.

WE'RE GOING TO BE FINE.

SON OF A--!

IT'S ABOUT FREAKIN' TIME.

IF ONE WERE ABLE TO OBSERVE DANNY KETCH BEING TRANSFORMED INTO GHOST RIDER...

...IT WOULD APPEAR TO HAPPEN IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE.

A FLASH OF LIGHT...

...AND THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE ASTRIDE HIS BIKE.

TO DANNY, THE TRANSFORMATION LASTS AN ETERNITY.

SEARING PAIN OF HELLFIRE.

FLESH--HIS VERY ESSENCE--MELTING FROM HIS BODY.

AND JUST WHEN DANNY FEELS AS IF DEATH IS IMMINENT...

FWOSH

...DANNY IS NO LONGER.

ONLY GHOST RIDER REMAINS.

VROOM

GUESS IT'S TIME FOR US TO JOIN THE FIGHT?

IT IS *PAST* TIME.

BE WARY OF THE INNOCENT.

HMM...HE'S BEING THOUGHTFUL... MAYBE THE KID'S GETTING THROUGH TO HIM?

KTOOM KTOOM

VROOOOOOM

OW! THAT ALMOST HURT, GIRL!

PTOOM PTOOM PTOOM

BUT WE'RE GOING TO HURT YOU A LOT MORE.

RUN! I'LL HOLD THEM HERE AS LONG AS I CAN!

TCHK

ACK!

INNOCENT BLOOD HAS BEEN SPILLED.

NOW YOU WILL FEEL THEIR PAIN!

GHOST RIDER?

WE'VE SEEN ALL ABOUT YOU ON TV. THAT REPORTER... LINDA WEI... SHE'S *HOT!*

SHE MAKES YOU SOUND PRETTY DANGEROUS, BUT...

...*WE* ARE NOT IMPRESSED!

FWAM

I MEAN, REALLY... YOU'RE JUST A BUNCH OF FLAMING BONES.

NOT MUCH TOUGHER THAN JIMMY-6'S GORILLAS...AND THERE WERE A *LOT* OF THEM.

HE CAME WITH BACKUP TOO.

KLIK

YOU'RE GOING TO WANT TO LET HIM GO.

TO SAY I'VE GOT A *COMPLICATED* RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WHOLE FLAMING-SKULL THING WOULD BE AN UNDERSTATEMENT...

...BUT RIGHT NOW, HE'S CONNECTED TO SOMEONE I THINK OF LIKE A BROTHER. I'LL GIVE YOU TO THE COUNT OF THREE.

THREE!

KTOOM

THUNK

I'D LIKE TO KILL THIS GUY NOW.

NO.

I AM THE SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE.

I DO NOT KILL.

VROOM VROOM

BUT HE WILL *SUFFER!*

HA!

THAT'S THE BEST YOU'VE GOT?

WE ARE GOING TO RIP THAT SKULL OFF YOUR SHOULDERS AND SHOVE IT UP--

TCHK

CHHK

CHHK

THOK

ARRRRRRGH!

NOOOO! WHAT DID YOU DO?! IT BURNS!!!

YOU THINK *THAT* HURTS?

WAIT UNTIL YOU FEEL WHAT HAPPENS NEXT.

NOOOOOOO!

THE HELLFIRE *AND* THE PENANCE STARE...?

IT HAS TRANSFORMED THEM BACK INTO HUMANS. LIKE THE ONE I FACED EARLIER TODAY.

SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL IS GIVING THESE ARCANE POWERS TO THEM. WE MUST FIND--

FREEZE!

SERIOUSLY?

WE DID JUST PUT AN END TO THIS... AND HE SAVED YOUR LIFE!

WE WILL GO.

HAVEN'T BEEN CAUGHT YET.

I WANT THEM.

I WANT THEM IN *PIECES.*

WHAT THE--?!

YOU TWO HAVE PROVEN TO BE ANOTHER DISAPPOINTMENT.

DISAPPOINTING *ME* IS ONE THING.

BUT NOW WE MUST ALL THREE FACE THE ONE WHO GAVE ME *MY* POWERS.

PAYMENT MUST BE MADE.

THE *HOST* WILL HAVE...

...HIS *TASTE!*

MASTER, MY SINCERE APOLOGIES FOR ONCE AGAIN FAILING.

OH... ENOUGH OF THAT, MY FRIEND.

WHERE WOULD I EVEN BE WITHOUT MY TRUSTED *BROKER?*

BRING THESE BROTHERS CLOSER.

I DID HAVE A TASTE OF THE VIOLENCE THEY CAUSED. THE DEATH. THE DESTRUCTION. IT WAS LOVELY.

ALL FED THROUGH THE PSYCHIC LINK CREATED WHEN YOU ENHANCED THEM WITH MY POWERS.

AS ALWAYS... IT ONLY SERVED TO WHET MY APPETITE FOR A LITTLE SOMETHING *MORE.*

ARE YOU NOTICING MY HAND? THE MISSING FINGERS?

AH YES...A MISFORTUNE FROM MY YOUTH. FROM A TIME BEFORE I HAD MY GREATER POWERS.

I WAS JUST A LOWLY *MORLOCK* BACK THEN...AND *ALWAYS* SO *HUNGRY*... SCOURING THE WORST PLACES FOR SUSTENANCE.

BUT THE PAST IS THE PAST. FOR NOW...I HAVE FEASTED UPON YOUR EXPERIENCES.

NOW I REQUIRE THE TASTE OF SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE... PALATABLE.

AHHHH!!

N-NOOOOO!

SEVERAL YEARS EARLIER, IN THE CYPRESS HILLS CEMETERY...

AN ARCANE BATTLE IS ENDING.

PEACE AND QUIET HAVE TEMPORARILY RETURNED TO A GRAVEYARD THAT SERVES AS A NEXUS TO DARKNESS...

...AND TO LIGHT.

WELL... IT'S DONE, ***CARETAKER.*** THE RETRIEVAL OF THE MEDALLION WENT AS PLANNED.

A LITTLE HARDER THAN I THOUGHT, BUT IT'S DONE.

THE ONLY THING THAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT WE HAVE...

...THIS.

AND THAT IT BE READY WHEN *HE* IS.

ALL THE THREADS ARE COMING TOGETHER FOR THE NEXT *RIDER.*

IT'S GONNA TAKE A COUPLE OF YEARS FOR THE NEXT HOST TO BE READY.

I'M GOING TO STASH THIS THING AWAY UNTIL THEN.

DAMN!

THERE'S A PIECE MISSING.

MUST HAVE BEEN DAMAGED IN THE BATTLE.

WE'VE GOT TO SCOUR THE AREA FOR IT--IT COULD SCREW *EVERYTHING* UP!

YUM.

TO BE CONTINUED!

NEXT: MEET THE BROKER

THIS NEW ADVERSARY IS BOOSTING THE POWERS OF GHOST RIDER'S ENEMIES. BUT WHAT IS HIS ULTIMATE GOAL? AND WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO DO WITH DANNY KETCH AND JOHNNY BLAZE?

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ZONE